

Get Ready for Freezing Temperatures

Water pipes and water meters can freeze within hours if exposed to cold air, especially when temperatures are below 32°F and remain below freezing for an extended period of time. If your pipes or meter freeze, you will not have water. It can be expensive to repair or replace them.



Frozen pipes are one of the biggest risks of property damage when the temperature drops. A burst pipe can cause more than \$5,000 in water damage.*

Property owners are responsible for protecting both water pipes and the water meter from damage. If you own vacant residential or commercial property, check that pipes and water meters are exposed to heat and circulating air in the building and are not closed off behind cabinets and doors. If there is no heat in the building, contact us to have the water shut off to the building.

The money-saving suggestions in this brochure may help you avoid a bill for damaged pipes or a water meter, and charges for plumbing work.

* Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety

Milwaukee Water Works

Safe, Abundant Drinking Water.

Contact Us

Milwaukee Water Works Customer Service Center
841 N. Broadway, Room 409
Milwaukee, WI 53202
Open Monday-Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Visit milwaukee.gov/water

Phone (414) 286-2830
TDD (414) 286-8801
Fax (414) 286-5452

Email for non-emergency contact watwebcs@milwaukee.gov
After 5:00 p.m. on weekdays and weekends, please call the 24-hour water control center, (414) 286-3710.

*Para una explicación en español,
por favor llame al (414) 286-2830.*

The Milwaukee Water Works is recognized nationally as a leader in providing high-quality drinking water and for its comprehensive water quality monitoring program. We purify Lake Michigan water with a multiple-step process including ozone and chlorine disinfection and biological filtration. These processes destroy and remove micro-organisms and contaminants, providing pure, safe water.

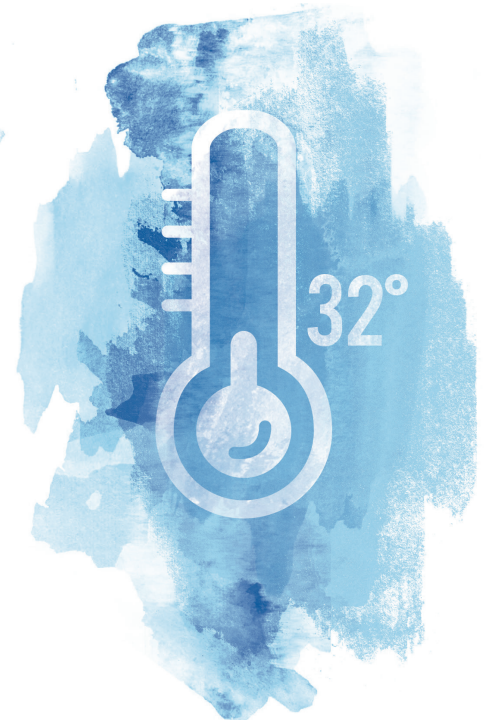
The Milwaukee Water Works provides drinking water to Milwaukee and all or parts of these communities in Milwaukee, Ozaukee, and Waukesha Counties:

Brown Deer	Menomonee Falls	Wauwatosa
Butler	Mequon	West Allis
Franklin	New Berlin	West Milwaukee
Greendale	Shorewood	Milwaukee County
Greenfield	St. Francis	Grounds Facilities
Hales Corners	Thiensville	

Established in 1871, the Milwaukee Water Works is proud to serve as the longest continuously operating water utility in Wisconsin.



PREVENT FROZEN WATER PIPES AND WATER METERS



milwaukee.gov/water

Milwaukee Water Works
Safe, Abundant Drinking Water.

Prepare for Winter Cold

Once the temperature outside begins to drop for winter, take these steps to prevent pipes and meters from freezing:

- **Most importantly**, make sure the interior temperature of your home or building AND the basement never drop below 32 °F.
- **Tightly close doors and windows to the outside.** Fill cracks in walls and around windows.
- **Eliminate cold drafts** near water pipes and the water meter.
- **Install storm windows** on basement windows.
- **Close up crawl spaces** to eliminate drafts.
- Before freezing temperatures set in, **turn off the water to garden hose connections** at an interior valve and drain the exposed piping.

Protect Your Pipes and Meters

It is colder near the floor and along the walls of a basement than at the ceiling, so make sure warm air is allowed to circulate around water pipes and the water meter. The pipes most likely to freeze are nearest a wall, door, window, and along the floor.

- **Wrap pipes** with insulation or heat tape.
- Open the doors to the rooms where the pipes and water meter are located to **allow warm air to circulate** around them.
- If your kitchen or bathroom sink is located against an outside wall, **insulate the wall** to prevent pipes from freezing.
- **Open the cabinet doors below sinks** to allow warm air to circulate around the pipes.
- Outdoor temperatures in the low teens are the sign you should **let a small trickle of cold water flow continuously** from at least one faucet in your home. The moving water in the pipe system may prevent freezing. Run the water from the lowest point in your home, usually the basement laundry sink. The cost of the extra water is low compared to the cost to repair a frozen or burst pipe.
- If the water meter is in an **outdoor pit**, check to see that the pit cover fits properly and there are no cracks into which cold wind could blow. The pipes, valves, and the water meter inside such pits should not touch the concrete walls.

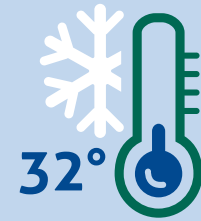
IF YOUR PIPES OR METER FREEZE, YOU WILL NOT HAVE WATER.



It is cheaper to let a trickle of water flow from at least one faucet to prevent freezing than to pay for plumbing repairs.



Frozen and burst pipes can cost you thousands of dollars.



This is the freezing point for water. It's important to keep your home and basement warmed above this temperature.

5 Steps to Thaw Frozen Water Pipes or a Water Meter

Water pipes are frozen if little or no water comes from the faucets when you turn them on.

1

Turn on a faucet located near the frozen pipe or water meter so you will see when the water starts flowing again.

2

Begin warming the pipes nearest the faucet and work toward the frozen section or the frozen water meter.

3

Blow warm air on the pipe or water meter using a hair dryer. Do not leave the hair dryer unattended or allow it to overheat.

4

Once water starts flowing again, turn on a nearby faucet to allow a pencil width-sized stream of water to flow from the faucet until heat is restored to the area. Please remember that your water account will be charged for all water used.

5

Eliminate cold drafts and allow warm air to circulate around the pipes and the water meter to prevent them from freezing again.

Never use a blowtorch or open flame to warm pipes or a water meter. This is a fire hazard that could cause an explosion.



If you suspect damage to your water pipes, please call a licensed plumber for assistance.

If you suspect a frozen water meter or damage to the water meter, please call us
Monday-Saturday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., (414) 286-8000. After 4:30 p.m. Monday-Saturday, and at any time on Sunday, please call (414) 286-3710. TDD (414) 286-8801.